



Transparency of qualifications,  
validation of non-formal and informal learning,  
credit transfer.

**Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)**  
**Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme**

Thematic Group on

“Transparency of qualifications,  
Validation of non-formal and informal learning,  
Credit transfer”

**BACKGROUND REPORT**  
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## I. Introduction

### I.1 The Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme and Thematic Monitoring

Leonardo da Vinci is a Community Action Programme in the field of vocational education and training (VET), first established in 1994 and reconfirmed in 1999.<sup>1</sup> In the programming period (2007-2013), further to a recent Decision of the European Council,<sup>2</sup> Leonardo will be part of a new and integrated Action Programme in the field of Lifelong Learning, including also the current Socrates measures (Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig), as well as a transversal arrangement (for supporting policy cooperation, language learning, ICT-based practices and dissemination of results) and the Jean Monnet Programme.<sup>3</sup>

The new Programme intends to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced society and to foster interaction, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, with the aim of becoming a world quality reference, in coherence with the objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

Within this framework, Leonardo da Vinci will act as the sectoral arrangement specifically devoted to vocational education and training. To this purpose, it envisages Community funding for several typologies of intervention:

- international mobility programmes (and, in particular, placements abroad for trainees in initial vocational training or for people in the labour market, as well as exchanges of practices among VET professionals of different countries);
- pilot projects aimed at developing and transferring innovative training methodologies, approaches, tools and products;
- exchange of experiences and networking between relevant actors in the field of vocational education and training;
- international theme-based partnerships.

For its peculiar features and contents, Leonardo da Vinci has always been and still is a “laboratory” for innovation in VET and an extraordinary means for the concrete implementation of those policies and objectives in the field of vocational training that the European Union has set and developed throughout the European Councils of Lisbon (March 2000) and Barcelona (2002), as well as the decisions of the European Ministers in Copenhagen (November 2002), Maastricht (December 2004) and Helsinki (December 2006), with the ultimate goal of making the European Union more competitive by investing in its human resources and, in particular, in its education and training systems.<sup>4</sup>

In its future implementation, the new arrangement needs to take stock of the experiences carried out in the programming phase which is just over, to gain thorough knowledge and awareness of the outcomes already achieved and to support the full exploitation of implemented outputs. To this purpose, the Thematic Monitoring initiative has strategic value.

Thematic Monitoring was originally promoted by the European Commission in 2002, in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme; recently (December 2005), it has been re-launched also in the perspective of the new programme in the field of lifelong learning. This initiative currently involves the National Agencies of all the countries participating to the Leonardo Programme and has the following main aims:

- to improve the knowledge about implemented and running Leonardo projects according to a thematic-based approach;

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<sup>1</sup> For further details, see the Decision which has implemented the arrangement in the programming period 2000-2006: [Decision 1999/382/EC of 26 April 1999](#) in *Official Journal of European Communities* L146, 11.06.1999 and the Website: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/news\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/news_en.html).

<sup>2</sup> [Decision No.1720/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006, establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html)).

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see the Presidency Conclusions of Lisbon and Barcelona European Councils ([http://europa.eu/european\\_council/conclusions/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/european_council/conclusions/index_en.htm)), the [Copenhagen Declaration](#), the [Maastricht Communiqué](#) and the [Helsinki Communiqué](#).

- to allow an exchange of information and the establishment of possible synergies among project initiatives concerning similar themes;
- to deepen mutual knowledge and, possibly, cross-fertilisation between policy makers, VET experts, projects promoters and final beneficiaries in specific fields, with a view to valorise achieved results and findings and to support their mainstreaming into European national, regional, sectoral systems and practices.
- to increase the visibility of the Programme as a whole across the participating countries.

In general, Thematic Monitoring has been and still intends to be an essential initiative for the qualitative follow-up and valorisation of projects results, as well as a good chance for the networking of all involved actors, for the benefit of the Programme itself.

The relevant themes of Thematic Monitoring have recently been re-defined; they correspond to current policy goals at European and national level, which have also been outlined in the priorities of several Leonardo da Vinci calls for proposals. These themes are the following:

- 1- VET and the labour market, guidance, target groups;
- 2- Development of competencies and skills within companies, SMEs, competences at the sectorial level;
- 3- Quality of VET systems and practices, continuous training of teachers and trainers;
- 4- Transparency of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer;
- 5- E-learning.

Each theme involves a group of National Agencies (supported by the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), who work together in order to carry out studies and analyses, organise events, identify good practices, support valorisation and mainstreaming of the results.

## II. The Thematic Group on Transparency, Validation and Credit Transfer<sup>5</sup>

### II.1 The members

The Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Group on “Transparency of qualifications, Validation of non-formal and informal learning, Credit transfer” has restarted its activities in April 2006, after the new impetus given to Thematic Monitoring at European level.

The group is led by the Italian Leonardo National Agency and it includes the Agencies of the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Norway, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden and The Netherlands. Moreover, it comprises an organisation representing relevant stakeholders in the Crafts sector (The Masters of Crafts in Norway).

Activities are supported by the European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture and, in particular, by the Unit which is responsible for the implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the Commission is also involved.

The specific focus of the Thematic Group has of course strong political implications (connected *inter alia* with the establishment of a European Qualification Framework, and the related national frameworks, as well as of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training; the promotion of the Single Framework on Transparency of Qualifications and Competences and its arrangements; the implementation and development of the Common European Principles on the Identification and Validation of non-formal and informal learning and the work on the cluster on the “Recognition of Learning Outcomes”).

The Thematic Group is of course open to any contribution to its work which might come from relevant and interested stakeholders, decision makers, experts, project promoters and final beneficiaries.

<sup>5</sup> See also [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/thematic/theme4\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/thematic/theme4_en.html) .

## II.2 Past achievements

The group has been built upon the achievements of the previous Thematic Group on “Transparency, assessment and validation knowledge”, which was led by the French Leonardo National Agency and already included some of its current members, as well as CEDEFOP, the European Commission, the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and national experts.

The group started its activities in 2002, when large political support and impetus was given at European and national level to the issues of transparency of competences and qualifications, as well as of validation of prior learning.<sup>6</sup> Within this context, the work of the Thematic Group was aimed at supporting the “Copenhagen process”<sup>7</sup>, by establishing a mutual fertilisation between the reflection of European experts and the concrete practice of Leonardo projects.

The main activities carried out by the group until 2004 have been the following:

- Identification of relevant Leonardo da Vinci projects with respect to the two main clusters identified (transparency and validation);
- Analysis of projects contents (also through a questionnaire sent out to promoters) and implementation of a specific study;<sup>8</sup>
- Organisation of three thematic events.<sup>9</sup>

The main reflections and indications drawn from this first round of activities can be summarised as follows:

- in the period 2002-2004 (i.e. when the work of the group was being carried out), the issues of transparency and validation became more and more relevant for Community policies, thus progressively increasing the strategic value of the thematic exercise on these topics;
- the related policy developments were carried out with growing success (for instance with the implementation of the new Europass and the Single Framework for Transparency) and with more and more ambitious goals and devices (the European Qualifications Framework, the European Credit Transfer System for VET, the Common Principles on Validation);
- the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in itself can have a significant impact on these themes from a twofold perspective: for the typology of measures it funds and for the typology of partnerships it promotes. As a matter of fact, Leonardo supports pilot experiences for the development and testing of innovative devices in the areas of transparency and validation;<sup>10</sup> moreover, it awards mobility grants to students and workers, who are the final beneficiaries of qualifications and prior learning recognition abroad. Finally, it encourages multiplayer partnerships, which can put together all the relevant actors in the field.

## II.3 Current activities

The challenges for the future, also on the basis of the experience already carried out, concern mainly:

- Further strengthen the areas of integration and cross-fertilisation between Leonardo and other arrangements, which are also relevant for the issues of transparency and validation (the new Programme on Lifelong Learning will surely allow a step forward to this purpose, but also the Structural Funds and national initiatives must be taken into account);
- Optimise the channels and tools for mutual exchange between Leonardo projects and related institutional settings, so as to support mainstreaming and transfer of innovation;
- Allow easily accessible information on the results of Leonardo projects;

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter III of this Report.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html).

<sup>8</sup> The study was carried out by CEDEFOP and CNCP (*Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle* - France).

<sup>9</sup> In particular: a meeting on “Validation of competences” (Brussels, June 2003); the conference “Leonardo’s Europe” (Bordeaux, March 2004: see proceedings at <http://www.socrates-leonardo.fr/upl/documents/actes3.pdf>); a seminar on “The needs of individuals and guidance as regards transparency tools” (Brussels, November 2004).

<sup>10</sup> See also § III.1.4.

- Improve awareness-raising and follow up on Thematic Monitoring, so as to fully valorise the contribution of this initiative to the aims mentioned above.

To this purpose, the Thematic Group has planned several activities for 2006-2007.

First of all, the identification and classification of relevant projects concerning the themes of Transparency, Validation and Credit Transfer (this activity will be focused not only on Leonardo pilot projects, language competences initiatives, networks, enquiries and thematic actions, but also on most significant mobility initiatives, as well as on experiences realised in the framework of other European arrangements - for instance, Grundtvig, Interreg, Equal, ESF, national and regional initiatives), in order to improve knowledge about existing practices and actually implemented results.

The analysis of pertinent initiatives will be carried out by classifying them according to general transversal clusters (depending whether their main aim is to support mobility and/or employability of students and workers) and possible sub-clusters related to given features (e.g., sectors, targets, methods and tools); this will allow to highlight the different and original contribution of projects from the perspective of each cluster.

Then, two thematic conferences will be organised, aimed at allowing mutual knowledge, exchange of experiences, dissemination and valorisation of good practices, cross-fertilisation between VET policy-makers, experts and practitioners (as a basis to support impact and mainstreaming of the results at European, national, regional, sectoral level).

The first event is planned in Bucarest - Romania for March 2007 and has the aim of highlighting the contribution of projects to the themes from the perspective of students' and workers' mobility. The second one is planned in Rome - Italy, for June 2007 and has the same approach (valorising relevant projects with respect to the theme), yet with a specific focus on employability.

Finally, a publication will be realised, in order to summarise the experience as a whole, to describe its achievements and impact (also in terms of targeted groups and sectors, support given to projects outputs implementation, added value of the cooperation, final evaluation and follow-up of the work done), to identify challenges and provide recommendations for the future development of policies and practices.

### III. The themes: state of the art and perspectives for the future

#### III.1 Transparency of qualifications and Credit transfer

##### *III.1.1 Definitions and general framework*

When approaching the wide theme of transparency of qualifications and, within it the specific issue of establishing a credit transfer system in vocational education and training, first of all it is necessary to set a terminological framework of reference. Transparency is linked to the identification, assessment and recognition of knowledge, competences and skills (learning outcomes) acquired by an individual either at the end of a formal training pathway or in whatever non-formal and informal learning context; for all these terms, a shared definition is therefore adopted.<sup>11</sup>

“Knowledge” means the outcomes of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of study or work.

“Competence” means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development.

“Skills” means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.

<sup>11</sup> The definitions which follow are taken from the European Commission "[Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme - Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning](#)" [COM (2006) 479 final - 05.09.2006]. See also the CEDEFOP Glossary.

“Learning outcomes” means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

“Qualification” means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Competences and qualifications are transparent when their value can be identified and compared, in the education and training context, in the labour market, in any social setting.

A transparent approach in the identification, assessment and recognition of learning outcomes can determine benefits for:

- Individuals, by enabling them
  - to judge the value of their own qualifications (for both academic and professional purposes);
  - to accumulate and transfer qualifications acquired in different settings, systems and countries;
- Employers, by enabling them
  - to better assess the relevance of qualifications offered in the market with respect to their own organisation’s needs;
- Training providers at all levels, by enabling them
  - to compare their respective training offers (in terms of structure of pathways and delivered contents);
  - to improve the quality standards of their training services through the adoption/adaptation of best practices developed elsewhere;
- Training systems, by making them
  - more easily accessible and flexible;
  - more comparable and open to communicate with other systems (“mutual trust”);
  - and finally, more in line with the objectives settled at European level in the framework of the Lisbon strategy.

More in general, an improved transparency of competences and qualifications at European level, is essential to support

- *mobility*: both students and workers would be empowered to use their qualifications and competences as a kind of “common currency”, which can be earned in one setting and spent in another<sup>12</sup> (from general education to higher education and to vocational training, from country to country, across sectors and institutions), thus giving full application to their right to free circulation all across Europe;
- *employability*: an improved awareness by individuals of actually possessed competences, a better knowledge by employers of competences required within their own organisations, a qualitative standardisation of training provision according to individual and market needs, would ensure a better matching between labour supply and demand.

### III.1.2 Existing arrangements and tools to support transparency

Increasing transparency of qualifications and credit transfer in Europe is a process that is driven by policy development and supported through the implementation of specific instruments and networks.

In recent years, a wide variety of initiatives have been carried out at Community and international level, to help European citizens to communicate better their competences and qualifications when asking for admission to a learning scheme or when looking for a job. Several tools were developed to this purpose, within both the European Community (for instance, the European format for *curricula vitae*<sup>13</sup> or the Europass Training<sup>14</sup>) and the Council of Europe (the Diploma Supplement<sup>15</sup> or the European Language Portfolio). These initiatives showed the need of a European approach to transparency of qualifications and

<sup>12</sup> Communication from the Commission 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality' [COM(2001)678 final - 21.11.2001].

<sup>13</sup> Proposed by [Commission Recommendation 2002/236/EC](#) (OJ L 79, 22.03.2002).

<sup>14</sup> Established by [Council Decision 1999/51/EC on the promotion of European pathways in work-linked training, including apprenticeship](#) (OJ L 17, 22.01.1999).

<sup>15</sup> Recommended by the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher education in the European Region, adopted by the Council of Europe at Lisbon on 11.04.1997.

competences, but were not yet part of a coordinated European policy in the field, which was yet to come, especially in the area of vocational education and training.

As a matter of fact, in the specific area of **higher education**, the promotion of transparency and credit transfer at European level through the development of targeted arrangements and tools had a tradition of its own. In 1989, the **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)** was introduced within the framework of Erasmus, in order to facilitate the recognition of periods of study abroad: it is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, objectives preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired. ECTS, which has since then been successfully tested and widely applied, is now developing into an accumulation system, to be implemented at institutional, regional, national and European level.

In 1999, the Education Ministers from several European countries then agreed to establish a **European Area of Higher Education** by 2010 (the **Bologna Declaration**) and envisaged specific actions to this purpose, concerning in particular the introduction of a system of academic grades which are easy to read and compare, as well as the establishment of a system of accumulation and transfer of credits (of the ECTS type already used successfully under Socrates-Erasmus).

In terms of targeted European action to support transparency and recognition for academic and learning purposes, it is also worth mentioning the network of **National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs)**, which was created in 1984 in order to give advice and information on the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken abroad - as well as the parallel **European Network of Information centres (ENIC)**, created by the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES.<sup>16</sup>

It is yet, with the launch of the "Lisbon strategy" that the European policy in the field of transparency of qualifications has gained strong political momentum in vocational education and training - and more in general in a lifelong learning perspective - and that a set of integrated initiatives has been set up.

At the **Lisbon European Council** in March 2000, government leaders set the European Union a 10-year mission to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. This strategy encompassed lifelong learning as one of its core elements, essential to achieve competitiveness and employability but also to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

In the **Communication on "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"** (2001), the European Commission then stressed the importance of improving existing arrangements and tools for valuing learning - wherever it might be acquired - as a pre-requisite for setting up a European area of lifelong learning, based on the right of free-movement of citizens. According to this document, learning can be appropriately valued through:

- the identification, recognition and assessment of non-formal and informal learning;
- the transfer and mutual recognition of formal certificates and diplomas, through both the promotion of already existing tools and the development of new instruments.

Moreover, the document highlights the need for a comprehensive framework supporting the transfer of qualifications and competences between different levels of formal education and training, as well as across institutional, sectoral and national borders.

In that same year, a Parliament and Council Recommendation<sup>17</sup> recommended the generalisation of the use of documents for the transparency of qualifications and competences, with a view to creating a European area for qualifications. The Commission's Action Plan for skills and mobility also called for instruments supporting transparency and transferability to be developed and strengthened in order to facilitate mobility within and between sectors. Further action to this purpose was then demanded by the **European Council** held in **Barcelona** (March 2002).

In November 2002, 31 Ministers of Education, social partners and the European Commission signed the "**Copenhagen declaration**"<sup>18</sup>, which pursued the Lisbon strategy and the "Common objectives of

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.enic-naric.net/instruments.asp>.

<sup>17</sup> [Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers](#) [OJ L 215 - 09.08.2001].

<sup>18</sup> For further information on the so-called "Copenhagen process" see the Internet site: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html).

education and training systems" subsequently agreed.<sup>19</sup> It also stressed the importance of improving transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences as an essential means to achieve Lisbon goals. Among the main elements of the follow-up to the Copenhagen declaration there were:

- the development of a "Europass" single framework for transparency;
- the development of a European credit transfer system for VET, as well as common reference levels for VET and common principles for certification;
- the development of common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- an increased support for the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level.

An intense work followed the adoption of this declaration. At the end of 2002, the European Council adopted a Resolution<sup>20</sup> calling for the implementation and rationalisation of information tools and networks in the field of transparency and suggesting the integration of existing instruments into a single framework. In the same period, a **European Forum on the Transparency of Qualifications** was established; managed by the Commission and CEDEFOP, in close cooperation with member States, social partners, NGOs, OECD, Euridyce and ETF, it was aimed at stimulating discussion and exchange of experience among all the different actors involved. In 2003, specific **technical working groups** on transparency of qualifications and on credit transfer in VET were created at European level, with the mandate to explore possible options for the design and development of further arrangements and tools in the field.

The first outcome of all these political inputs and technical work was the establishment of a **single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications (Europass)**, adopted through a European Parliament and Council Decision at the end of 2004.<sup>21</sup> The new Europass is a coordinated portfolio of documents, which citizens can use on a voluntary basis to better communicate and present their qualifications throughout Europe. It includes and rationalises already existing instruments and in particular:

- **Europass-curriculum vitae**, which is a model for a systematic, chronological and flexible presentation of personal information, language proficiency, work experience, education and training attainments, as well as additional competences held by an individual;
- **Europass-Mobility**, which is a tool to document organized periods of learning attended in another country;
- **Europass-Diploma supplement**, which is a document attached to a higher education diploma, in order to make it easier for third persons - particularly those of another country - to understand what the diploma means in terms of knowledge and competences acquired by its holder;
- **Europass-Certificate Supplement**, which is a document attached to a vocational certificate and has the same aims of the Diploma Supplement, yet related to vocational training area and not to higher education;
- **Europass-Language Portfolio**, which is a document in which language learners can record their language learning and cultural experiences and competences.

In order to support the use of these tools, as well as to provide the necessary information and guidance, each member State has established a **National Europass Centre (NEC)**; all the existing centres are joint in a network, coordinated by the Commission.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of information tools dedicated to promote transparency, it is worth mentioning also the creation of **Ploteus portal on learning opportunities**, which gives information about learning and training possibilities across Europe, as well as on education and training systems of the different countries.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In 2002, the Education Council and the Commission endorsed a [10-year work programme](#) to be implemented in order to achieve the objectives set at Lisbon. Approved by the European Council, these agreements constitute the new and coherent Community strategic framework of co-operation in the fields of education and training ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives\\_en.html#recognising](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#recognising)).

<sup>20</sup> [Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training](#) (OJ C 13, 18.01.2003).

<sup>21</sup> [Decision no. 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences \(Europass\)](#) (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004).

<sup>22</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index_en.html) ; <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>.

<sup>23</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp>. Ploteus has been set up in order to respond to the conclusions of the Lisbon and Stockholm European Councils (March 2000 and March 2001), which invited the European Commission and Member States to create a Europe-wide service providing information on jobs and learning opportunities.

With specific reference to the recognition of qualifications needed for professional purposes, European citizens who are qualified professionals in one Member State and want to practise their profession in other Member States can now rely upon a recent set of Directives<sup>24</sup> which are progressively supporting the **mutual recognition of qualifications in the area of regulated professions**. In particular, Directive no. 36/2005 establishes an automatic recognition of qualifications for professions with harmonised training requirements; where such a harmonisation cannot be achieved, the hosting country can award recognition subject to compensatory measures (tests, internships, etc.). Such measures can be avoided only if Member States agree on “common platforms” (i.e. a set of qualification criteria which can cover the identified substantial gaps in training requirements). This approach is a crucial step forward towards the identification of standards and minimum requirements for carrying out a profession all over Europe.

### *III. 1.3 Future challenges*

The main goals set by the European Union for the future concern the full implementation of a common framework for qualifications, as well as a system for credit transfer in VET.

Since 2003, European policy makers have repeatedly called for the development of a **European Qualifications Framework**, which could strengthen the links between frameworks at national and sectoral level and support lifelong learning. The need of a common reference enabling transparency, transfer and recognition was then indicated as a priority in the Joint Interim report of the Education Council and the Commission on the implementation of the “Education and Training 2010” work programme (February 2004).<sup>25</sup> In the Maastricht Communiqué on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training,<sup>26</sup> this primary need was reasserted with reference to both vocational education and training (VET) and general (secondary and higher) education. In the recent Helsinki Communiqué,<sup>27</sup> the European Ministers, the social partners and the Commission highlighted the importance of further strengthening the ongoing process and focusing the work on the development, testing and implementation of common European tools.

In higher education, this was actually achieved at the Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (May 2005). The Conference adopted a “**Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**”, comprising three cycles,<sup>28</sup> generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. State Ministers committed themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the European framework by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007. The need was stressed to ensure complementarity between this EHEA arrangement and a similar framework to be developed for lifelong learning (encompassing general education as well as VET).

The parallel work on the **implementation of the European Qualifications Framework** had actually started since autumn 2004, through the establishment of a specific **Experts Group**, consisting of representatives of main areas of education, sectors and social partners. This group had the mandate to develop reference levels for the framework, based upon learning outcomes. The group proposal was outlined by a **Commission Staff working document**<sup>29</sup>, on the basis of which a wide consultation process was launched within 31 countries participating in the “Education and Training 2010” work programme;<sup>30</sup> the consultation showed a shared need for such a framework and allowed to gather suggestions and recommendations, above all in terms of simplification of the proposed structure. A **second experts group** (consisting of members appointed by member States, external experts and specific contribution by CEDEFOP and ETF) was then appointed in order to elaborate a simplified and revised set of reference level descriptors and a set of key definitions.

After positive advice of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training on the main elements of the revised structure,<sup>31</sup> the European Commission has recently adopted a **proposal for a Recommendation of**

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<sup>24</sup> In particular [Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications](#) (OJ L 255, 30.09.2005), but also Directive no. 32/2005.

<sup>25</sup> See [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir\\_council\\_final.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> The Communiqué was released by the Ministers responsible for VET of 32 States, the European social partners and the Commission on 15 December 2004.

<sup>27</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/helsinki\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/helsinki_en.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> The Berlin communiqué spoke of “levels”.

<sup>29</sup> [SEC \(2005\) 957 \(July 2005\)](#).

<sup>30</sup> The consultation took place from July to December 2005.

<sup>31</sup> This advice was released on 21.06.2006.

the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF). Adoption of this recommendation is expected late 2007.

The EQF is intended as a translation device for comparing qualifications held by individual citizens and for facilitating transparency and transfer. As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, it encompasses general and adult education, vocational education and training, as well as higher education. Member States are invited to use it on a voluntary basis.

The EQF is based on **eight reference levels**, from qualifications achieved at the end of compulsory schooling to higher academic qualifications. Each level describes what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired. The EQF reference levels therefore shift the focus away from the traditional approach, based on learning inputs (length of a learning experience, type of institution), to a scheme related to learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences acquired).

For the implementation of this arrangement, Member States are asked to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF, or to develop coherent national frameworks, by 2009. The establishment of **National EQF Centres** in all countries is also envisaged to support this process and provide with information and guidance; moreover, it is foreseen that all existing transparency and certification tools will have to include a reference to EQF.

Once fully operational, the EQF will act as a reference tool for both individuals and employers all across Europe. Individuals will be enabled to better understand and exploit the value of the qualification they have achieved in a given context, whenever moving to a different (national, institutional, sectoral) setting, for learning and/or professional purposes, as well as whenever progressing in their career. Employers will have an additional, clearer and shared instrument to analyse and understand the actual competences of a job seeker. The EQF will therefore

- support employability, by ensuring a better match between labour supply and demand, as well as between the needs of the market and the contents of training provision;
- facilitate citizens' mobility for work and study.

Mobility and employability can be further supported also with the establishment of the **European Credit Transfer System for vocational education and training (ECVET)**. As already mentioned, the full implementation of such a device, in parallel and coherence with the ECTS mechanism already applied in the area of higher education, was considered as a priority by the Copenhagen Declaration (2002).

The activity of the technical working group on credit transfer has led first of all to the definition of principles and of a reference framework for ECVET application;<sup>32</sup> then, a credit points scale was designed together with a structure for the memoranda of understanding to be subscribed between the VET providers involved in using the arrangement.<sup>33</sup> In order to support the process and to encourage a testing phase, the Commission has recently released a targeted Call for proposals.<sup>34</sup> The Call has awarded grants to projects aimed at establishing an operational framework at policy level to allow experimentation and researches on ECVET, as well as at supporting transnational cooperation on design, development, testing and dissemination of methods and tools for ECVET. Moreover, on the basis of the two reports released by the technical working group, a public consultation process has just been launched.

ECVET aims to set common principles, a reference framework and a mechanism for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired by an individual in whatever setting (through formal training, as well as with non-formal or informal activities), in order to support their accumulation and transfer within and between different training systems. Its implementation would allow citizens to access the formal system from a non-formal learning context, to have their learning outcomes valued, to move from one national VET system to another and to convert such outcomes when moving. It would therefore contribute to the geographic and professional mobility of trainees (transfer), as well as to individual development and employability (accumulation).

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<sup>32</sup> European Commission, "[ECVET - Principles and reference framework for implementation](#)", 24 September 2004.

<sup>33</sup> "[ECVET - Technical specifications](#)", Report of the Credit Transfer Technical Working Group (28.06.2005).

<sup>34</sup> For further information on the Call for proposals EAC/33/06 "Award of grants for the promotion and coordination of projects to develop Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)" see the Internet site [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/calls/3306/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/calls/3306/index_en.html).

The underlying principles for ECVET application are the following:<sup>35</sup> the objectives of a learning pathway, a training programme or elements of a qualification are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be mastered at a given reference level; these learning outcomes are formally agreed and organised in units; a maximum number of credits is allocated to a set of units; the transfer/exchange value of each unit may therefore be defined in terms of credit points. An agreement between the institutions involved in a learner mobility experience ECVET-based needs to be formalised through a memorandum of understanding. Participation to the application of the device, both at VET providers' and at systems' level, is voluntary; its implementation will of course be linked to and coherent with the European Qualifications Framework.

EQF and ECVET are the main initiatives the European Union is currently implementing to support transparency of qualifications and transfer of credits across Europe. Community action in this field is course subsidiary to Member States policies - insofar as it intervenes only when shared goals cannot be sufficiently achieved by national governments - and proportional - in the sense that it is not meant to replace national systems but only to create common frameworks of reference. And for the achievement of the objectives the EU has set at Lisbon, the finalisation of such arrangements as EQF and ECVET is of course a crucial step.<sup>36</sup>

## III.2. Validation of non-formal and informal learning

### III.2.1 Definitions and general framework

For the purpose of clarity and common understanding of the concepts underlying the theme of validation of non-formal and informal learning, the definitions proposed by the CEDEFOP glossary<sup>37</sup> will be taken hereafter as a reference.

Learning is contextual and three distinct settings of learning must be distinguished: formal, non-formal and informal learning. **Formal learning** consists of learning that occurs in an organised and structured context (in a school/training centre or on the job) and that is explicitly designated as learning in terms of objectives, time or learning support. **Non-formal learning** means learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element. It is sometimes described as semi-structured learning. Whereas formal and non-formal learning are both intentional from the learner's point of view, **informal learning** is unintentional in most cases. It designates learning resulting from daily work-related, family or leisure activities. It is not organised or structured. It is also referred to as experiential or incidental/random learning.

While formal learning typically leads to **certification**, *ie* a formal validation by accredited awarding bodies of the knowledge, know-how and/or competences acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure, non-formal and informal learning typically do not.

The **validation of non-formal and informal learning** can be defined as the process of identifying (making visible) and valuing (assessing and recognising) the results and outcomes of learning taking place outside formal education and training institutions. The assessment consists of the evaluation of the attainments (knowledge, know-how and/or competences) of an individual through a sum of methods and processes ; it typically leads to certification. The assessment can be formative (aiding the learning process) or summative (providing proof of an accomplished learning sequence and facilitating transfer between different levels and contexts) in its purpose. The **recognition** of competences can be formal, through the grant of an official status to competences (award of certificates or grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained competences) and/or social, through acknowledgment of the value of competences by economic and social stakeholders.

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<sup>35</sup> European Commission, "ECVET ..." (24.09.2004), p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Debate and exchange of experiences in this field is possible for all interested subjects through several virtual communities created by CEDEFOP and in particular:

- "Credit Transfer in VET - European Qualifications Framework" <http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/credittransfer-efq>
- "Non-Formal and Informal Learning" <http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/nfl>
- "Europass Implementation Virtual Community" <http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/europass>

<sup>37</sup> "Terminology of vocational training policy", CEDEFOP, 2004 [http://www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c313/cv-1\\_en\\_US\\_glossary\\_4030\\_6k.pdf](http://www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c313/cv-1_en_US_glossary_4030_6k.pdf).

Five main categories of **validation approaches** have been identified<sup>38</sup> : tests and examination ; declarative methods ; the portfolio method ; observation ; simulation and evidences extracted from work.

With the attainments of an individual being measured, the concept of validation of non formal and informal learning encompasses a shift in focus from **learning inputs** (location, duration and teaching methods) to **learning outcomes** (appropriate specifications of what a person should know or be able to do).

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is also to be closely to the concept of **lifelong learning** (designating learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons). In a lifelong learning system, individuals shall be able to combine learning outcomes from different settings and contexts.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning supports both individuals' **mobility** and **employability** by contributing:

- to promote personal and professional development throughout life (→ employability) ;
- to give a second chance to those who have not succeeded in initial education or have no qualifications (→ employability) ;
- to support economic mutations and face needs in higher competences (→ employability) ;
- to facilitate links between job market and educational institutions and respond better to the needs of the job market (→ employability)
- to respond to the formalisation of job market (→ employability)
- to facilitate internal and external mobility in companies and at a geographic level (→ mobility)

### *III.2.2 Existing arrangements and tools to support validation*

Most European countries are currently developing and implementing methods, institutions and systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Some countries are still at an experimental stage ; some countries are moving towards national validation systems ; and some other countries have already established permanent national systems focusing on learning outcomes. Numerous initiatives have also been set up at enterprise and sector level that still need to be thoroughly mapped.

Since 2000 and the adoption of the "Lisbon strategy", political inputs at European level have clearly contributed to emphasize the crucial role of learning taking place outside formal education and training and to highlight the issue of validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In follow-up to the report on the concrete future objectives of European education and training systems (2001), the detailed work programme adopted by the Council (2002) called for the development of ways to officially validate non-formal learning experiences.

Back in 2001, in its Communication on "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" (2001), the European Commission stressed the importance of improving existing arrangements and tools for valuing learning - wherever it might be acquired - as a pre-requisite for setting up a European area of lifelong learning and recommended the setting up of a **European Inventory** to support exchange of experiences on identification, recognition and assessment of non-formal and informal learning. A first version of this inventory was made available to the public in 2004, followed up by an extended and deepened version in 2005<sup>39</sup>. Updated versions are expected for mid and end 2007.

In November 2002, the European ministers of Education and Training, the social partners and the European Commission stated in the **Copenhagen declaration** that there was a need " *to develop a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater comparability between approaches in different countries and at different levels*". In the aftermath of it, a Commission expert group on validation of non-formal learning was set up in 2003 and a virtual community on validation of non-formal and informal learning is currently administered by the CEDEFOP<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Manuel Souto Otero, Andrew McCoshan and Kerstin Junge (ECOTEC), « *A European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning* », 2005.

<sup>39</sup> [www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory/2005.html](http://www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory/2005.html)

<sup>40</sup> <http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/nfl>.

Then in May 2004, the ministers of Education and Training adopted a set of common principles<sup>41</sup> to be applied on a voluntary basis by the Member States, the Commission and stakeholders engaged in the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. *"A set of common European principles on validation can contribute to increased compatibility and coherence and can thus support lifelong and life wide learning. A set of common principles cannot replace work at national, regional, sector-based and local level but have to bring in an additional element contributing to increased overall quality and the linking and bridging of approaches at different levels and different contexts"*. These common principles cover four key areas:

- **Individual entitlements** - the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. There should be equal access and equal and fair treatment for all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected.

- **Obligations of stakeholders** - stakeholders, should establish, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. These should include appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Stakeholders should provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals.

- **Confidence and trust** - the processes, procedures and criteria for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.

- **Credibility and legitimacy** - systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders. The process of assessment should be impartial and mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest. The professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.

These common European principles, among which the quality process is central, provide a framework for further work on the development of validation of non-formal and informal learning at European and national level. Member countries are expected to disseminate and promote the use of these principles. They are invited to encourage the European social partners and non-governmental organisations to use and adapt them as appropriate.

In March 2006, a cluster on "Recognition of learning outcomes" was set up in the framework of the "Education and Training 2010" work programme. This cluster pursues two main issues : the development of methods for validation of non-formal and informal learning and the shift from a learning input to a learning outcomes perspective in national education and training policies

### *III.2.3 Future challenges*

The setting up of **qualifications frameworks** at national and European levels, by shifting the orientation from learning inputs to learning outcomes, should contribute in the future to promote and facilitate the implementation of validation of non-formal and learning systems.

Coherent and comparable ways of presenting the results of the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning at European level will have to be developed. The existing instruments in the Europass framework for transparency of qualifications and competences can contribute to this.

The development of quality assurance mechanisms and, in particular, the professional development of those who carry out assessment will also be issues to be tackled in the future.

Finally, the common European principles will support ongoing work on credit transfer and accumulation, quality assurance and guidance.

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<sup>41</sup> Draft Conclusions of the Council of the European Union on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning ([9600/04 EDUC 118 - SOC 253](#), 18.05.2004).

## *IV. Transparency and validation within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and the new Lifelong Learning Programme*

### IV.1 The three calls for proposal of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (2000-2006)

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme is a crucial instrument for the implementation of a European vocational training policy. Through its experimental and innovative character, it functions as a laboratory supporting the development of new approaches and solutions to contribute to the general objectives outlined by the Lisbon and Barcelona Councils and to the specific priorities set by Copenhagen.<sup>42</sup>

The issues of transparency of qualifications and validation of non-formal and informal learning have been constantly tackled by the Programme throughout its second phase of implementation (2000-2006). As a matter of fact, all the **Calls for proposals** released within this period contained specific priorities dedicated to these themes. The Programme has asked project promoters to work in coherence with the European developments outlined in the previous chapters, but also to give any possible input to those processes from bottom-up, so as to create a virtuous circle of policies and concrete practices.

In the **first Call** (valid for the period 2000-2002),<sup>43</sup> such a reference was still quite generic, as the related policy framework at European level was little outlined. **Priority 6** of the Call was dedicated to “**Transparency - Promoting the transparency of qualifications**” and proposals were asked to contribute to the theme by:

- elaborating new methodologies for the assessment, certification and validation of competences acquired on the job and, more in general outside the formal training systems;
- implementing new mechanisms and methodologies for the transparency of qualifications.

The **second Call (2003-2004)**<sup>44</sup> was more focused. It acknowledged the importance of valuing learning as a pre-requisite for the creation of an area of lifelong learning, building on the right of free movement within the EU. The identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as the transfer and mutual recognition of formal certificates and diplomas were highlighted as key issues. A dedicated priority (**Priority 1 - Valuing learning**) encouraged the submission of proposals concerning:

- the development of new sustainable and transferable approaches to valuing (formal, non-formal and informal) learning, with specific emphasis on learning within enterprises and industrial sectors;
- the development of certification so as to promote transparency of diplomas, qualifications and competences;
- the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of identification, assessment and recognition of informal and non-formal learning;
- the development of tools and methodologies for the assessment and recognition of language skills needed or acquired in the workplace;
- the definition of quality standards of diplomas and certificates developed by industry sectors and branches;
- the development of European integrated approaches for valuing learning outcomes (formal, informal and non-formal) by the identification of common denominators in terms of methodologies, standards and institutional arrangements;
- the evaluation of models of individual learning schemes.

The **third Call (2005-2006)**<sup>45</sup> was drafted after the Lisbon-Copenhagen process had been launched and was specifically aimed at supporting the achievement of its main goals (the development of the European labour market and the transformation, modernisation and adaptation of the European education and training systems). Three priorities were addressing the issues of transparency (including credit transfer) and validation, in connection with the Lisbon objectives.

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<sup>42</sup> Call for proposals under the second phase of Leonardo da Vinci programme ([EAC/11/04](#)).

<sup>43</sup> Call for proposals (Directorate-General for Education and Culture ([2000/C23/08](#)) under the Leonardo da Vinci programme (LdV II).

<sup>44</sup> Addendum to the 2003 to 2004 Call for proposals under the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme ([EAC/15/02](#)).

<sup>45</sup> Call for proposals (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) under the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme - ([EAC/11/04](#)).

**Priority 1 - Promoting transparency of qualifications** encouraged the submission of proposals concerning:

- the development of new measures and instruments to present, promote and compare qualifications and competences at European, national and sectoral level;
- the development of vocational training opportunities specifically taking into account the transparency and the transferability of the outcomes to formal education;
- the definition and development of quality standards of diplomas and certificates, particularly at sector level, and contributing to transparency;
- the development of transparency instruments and services - particularly at sector level - consistent with the overall European framework for transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass);
- the analysis of how guidance and counselling have supported and contributed or may support and contribute to transparency of qualifications and competences at European, national and sector level;
- the development of sectoral networks, centres of excellence, structures that facilitate the exchanges of experiences and good practices.

**Priority Th-1 - Credit Transfer in VET** supported thematic actions focusing on :

- the application of Credit Transfer systems and the development of new approaches to credit transfer in VET;
- the development and application of common reference levels, and common objectives for certification for VET, in view of the medium term ambition to develop, by 2010, a coherent European credits and qualifications 'meta-framework', specified according to a 'typology' of knowledge, skills/tasks and competences.

**Priority Th-2 - Validation of non-formal and informal learning** supported thematic actions focusing on:

- the exchange of experiences and good practice in the field of identification, assessment and recognition of informal and non-formal learning;
- the development of high quality, cost efficient validation methodologies to be used at European, national and sector level;
- the development and improvement of standards for validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- the improvement of guidance and counselling in relation to validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- the analysis of research outcomes and experiments on innovative pedagogy, supporting learning outside formal education and training institutions, in particular at the workplace or in multifunctional learning centres.

In line with these priorities, several initiatives have been carried out during the second phase (2000-2006) of Programme's implementation and significant contribution has therefore been given to policy development by projects' practice.

Some examples of relevant and successful Leonardo da Vinci experiences concerning transparency of qualifications and validation of prior learning are provided in the Annex of this Report. These projects have been classified according to the relevant theme they tackled with (transparency of qualifications in general - and credit transfer within it as a specific topic - and validation of non-formal and informal learning) and further clusterised depending on their main aim being more focused on a support to the mobility or the employability of students and workers. The examples given do not of course exhaust the wide and articulated scenario of the initiatives actually implemented in the field, but are a concrete representation of the innovation allowed by the Programme.

#### **IV.2 The first call of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)**

As already mentioned, in the current programming period (2007-2013), Leonardo da Vinci has been integrated in the new Programme for Lifelong Learning, together with Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, the Jean Monnet Programme and a new Transversal Programme for policy cooperation, ICT development, language competence sand dissemination of results.

As many of the European actions supporting transparency and transfer are still being implemented, the Lifelong Learning Programme will continue to support bottom-up contribution to these issues by project

promoters, by dedicating specific parts of its first Call for proposals for 2007<sup>46</sup> which has just been launched.

With particular reference to the Leonardo da Vinci sectoral programme, the Call envisages two relevant priorities.

**Priority 4 - European credit transfer for VET (ECVET)** encourages the submission of proposals focusing on:

- the application of credit transfer systems based on ECVET principles and conventions, as well as the development of new approaches to credit transfer for VET;
- the development and application of processes for assessment, validation, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes for VET qualifications, linked to effective implementation of a credit transfer system.

**Priority 5 - Validation of non-formal and informal learning** substantially reaffirms most of the areas of action already outlined by the last Leonardo da Vinci Call (exchange of experience on validation, development of specific methodologies and standards, improvement of targeted guidance and counselling).

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<sup>46</sup> Call for proposals (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) under the Lifelong Learning Programme - ([EAC/61/2006](#)).

## V. Relevant bibliography and interesting Websites

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<http://www.eaconsortium.net/>
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<http://www.evta.net>
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<http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp>
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## Annex II - Examples of relevant Leonardo projects under the themes

<b>Project Title</b>	The European harmonization of nursing curricula in Romania		
<b>Contractor</b>	Universitatea de Medicina si Farmacie Timisoara		
<b>Contact details</b>	<i>Name:</i> Simona Ruxandra Dragan <i>Address:</i> Piata Eftimie Murgu 2, Timisoara - Romania <i>Telephone:</i> +40 0256 220479 <i>Fax:</i> +40 0256 220479 <i>E-mail:</i> <a href="mailto:sdragan@cardiologie.ro">sdragan@cardiologie.ro</a>		
<b>Selection year</b>	2005	<b>Project Number</b>	RO/2005/95166/EX
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project improves trainers' skills and competencies in order to facilitate the integration by teaching personnel of the European concept of nursing. The beneficiaries are University teachers involved in the curricula reform and new curricula design.</p> <p>The main aim of the project is to harmonise the Romanian nursing curricula with the western European equivalents.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.umft.ro">www.umft.ro</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Transparency of qualifications		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility		

<b>Project Title</b>	Instructor for Driving		
<b>Contractor</b>	Association of Driving Schools in Slovakia		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2002	<b>Project Number</b>	SK/02/B/F/PP-142272
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project tried to make the education and training of instructors for driving more transparent by making an analysis of the training, curricula and requirements linked to the above-mentioned profession and subsequently by developing the training modules based on the shared knowledge.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.ifd.szm.com/">http://www.ifd.szm.com/</a> and <a href="http://www.ifd.sk">http://www.ifd.sk</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Transparency of qualifications		
<b>Cluster</b>	Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	European Plastic Welder SME Competence Transfer Model		
<b>Contractor</b>	SmartCom Interaktiv		
<b>Contact details</b>	<i>Name:</i> Erik Engh <i>Address:</i> Gullhaug Torg 1 Nydalen, 0410 Oslo - Norway <i>Telephone:</i> +47 93 05 87 50 <i>Fax:</i> <i>E-mail:</i> <a href="mailto:erik.engh@smartcom.no">erik.engh@smartcom.no</a>		
<b>Selection year</b>	2006	<b>Project Number</b>	N/06/B/PP-165009
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The plastic welding industry needs certification of most of its training delivery, due to a major proportion of work and occupations connected to safety issues, like pipeline transport of chemicals, oil installations etc. The project will develop a web-based "just-in-time-training programme for both welders in SMEs as well as further training for teachers in training institutions. The aim is to get the programme certified through the EWF, the European Welding Foundation. This will support recruitment of workers/welding operators with welding practice. They will be motivated to undergo training that gives them a European certificate within their trade.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.smartcom.no">www.smartcom.no</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Transparency of qualifications / Validation of non-formal and informal learning		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	Developing sector-specific multi-format foreign language teaching materials for the vocations		
<b>Contractor</b>	University of Rousse, Bulgaria		
<b>Contact details</b>	<i>Name:</i> Stoyanka Smrikarova <i>Address:</i> 8, Studentska Street, 7017 Rousse - Bulgaria <i>Telephone:</i> +359 82 888743 <i>Fax:</i> <i>E-mail:</i> <a href="mailto:SSmrikarova@ecs.ru.acad.bg">SSmrikarova@ecs.ru.acad.bg</a>		
<b>Selection year</b>	2005	<b>Project Number</b>	BG/05/B/F/LA-166043
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>Alongside with the development of teaching materials, the project aims to set the foundations for establishing uniform diagnostic and assessment criteria for the foreign language competence of transnational workforce and for developing sector-specific language competence recognition and certification tools, in accordance with the requirements of the European Language Portfolio.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.ru.acad.bg">http://www.ru.acad.bg</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Transparency of qualifications / Credit transfer		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	Embedding Standards		
<b>Contractor</b>	DEKRA Akademie GmbH		
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	<i>E-mail:</i>	<a href="mailto:peter.littig@dekra.com">peter.littig@dekra.com</a>	
<b>Selection year</b>	2004	<b>Project Number</b>	D/04/B/F/PP-146192
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>Based on the development of three job profiles for the IT and Multimedia Industry, the promoter linked these specialist profiles to the proposal of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and designed a model for the allocation of credits.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.embedding-standards.com/">http://www.embedding-standards.com/</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Transparency of qualifications / Credit transfer		
<b>Cluster</b>	Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	Securitas Mare I and II		
<b>Contractor</b>	Kalmar Maritime Academy (Sjöfartshögskolan Kalmar)		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2002 and 2006	<b>Project Number</b>	S/02/B/F/PP-127010 and SE/06/B/F/PP-161007
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project has developed a course concept for the mandatory training courses for seafarers concerning crisis management. The course concept has become a new standard in six of the participating countries, where recognition of certificates between countries has taken place. The project has shown a way to continue with harmonization of all other similar types of certificates, leading to the creation of a transparent and open labour market. The continuation of the project, "Securitas Mare II", will spread the course concept to other countries.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://securitasmare.sjofartshogskolan.nu/">http://securitasmare.sjofartshogskolan.nu/</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Credit transfer		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	VQTS - Vocational Qualification Transfer System		
<b>Contractor</b>	3s research laboratory - Forschungsverein, Vienna		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2003	<b>Project Number</b>	A/03/B/F/PP-158034
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The VQTS pilot project is creating a systematic procedure to ensure international transfer of vocational qualifications. The main target group for the project's results are students / apprentices in initial vocational training who want to undertake learning and training periods abroad. The vocational field of "Mechanical Engineering" was selected as a model for developing and testing this procedure.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.vocationalqualification.net">www.vocationalqualification.net</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Credit transfer		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility		

<b>Project Title</b>	Assessing Voluntary Experiences in a professional perspective		
<b>Contractor</b>	IRIV - Institut de Recherche et d'Information sur le Volontariat		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2003	<b>Project Number</b>	F/03/B/P/PP-151002
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project has lead to the elaboration of tools and of a methodology for identifying, evaluating and validating, for a professional purpose, skills and qualifications acquired through volunteering.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.europeassociations.net/">http://www.europeassociations.net/</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Validation of non-formal and informal learning		
<b>Cluster</b>	Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	European network for valuation prior learning		
<b>Contractor</b>	European Centre for Validation of prior learning		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2002	<b>Project Number</b>	NL/02/B/F/NT-123207
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project has created a European network for validation of prior learning. It focuses on the needs of individual learners (e.g. with a workbook for people in a VPL training course). Furthermore it caters for employers/organisations that want to facilitate these individuals. Finally, it advises on how the VET system, guidance and counselling services etc. can adapt itself to render flexible services to these individuals and organisations.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.vpl4.eu">http://www.vpl4.eu</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Validation of non-formal and informal learning		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	FAIR - For a new recognition of skills informally and non formally developed in the fair trade sector		
<b>Contractor</b>	Consorzio CTM - Altromercato s.c.a.r.l.		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2004	<b>Project Number</b>	RF-81506
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The aim of this reference material project is to undertake an in-depth study related to non-formal and informal learning within the "fair trade" sector. The partnership includes 12 organisations from 5 countries (IT, ES, FR, MT, PL), with universities and representatives of the fair trade sector.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.fairproject.org">www.fairproject.org</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Validation of non-formal and informal learning		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		

<b>Project Title</b>	Il ruolo delle parti sociali e delle autorità pubbliche nella gestione del sistema formativo ( <i>The role of social partners and public authorities in training system management</i> )		
<b>Contractor</b>	Provincia Autonoma di Trento - Dipartimento Politiche sociali e del lavoro		
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<b>Selection year</b>	2003	<b>Project Number</b>	I/03/B/F/PP-154142
<b>Project Abstract</b>			
<p>The project aims at developing practices for enhancing cooperation between social partners and public authorities in the development of education and training policies, with a specific focus on the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>The initiative has elaborated a survey of continuing training systems of the 6 partner countries, a glossary of relevant terminology, study cases, a catalogue of good practices in the field and a guide for decision makers (the latter containing recommendations to stakeholders about learning on the job and validation of competences).</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.leonardo-gocet.info">http://www.leonardo-gocet.info</a>; <a href="http://www.provincia.tn.it">www.provincia.tn.it</a></p>			
<b>Theme</b>	Validation of non-formal and informal learning		
<b>Cluster</b>	Mobility / Employability		